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LETTERS TO THE FORUM:

Norman Thomas Denies Receipt of CIA Funds

Editor, The NewsLeader:

Your editorial of October 27, headed "Norman Thomas, CIA Agent," is absurd, unless you want to imply that the CIA itself was guilty of supporting our educational work which in turn was friendly to Bosch. If this were so, it would be hard to explain subsequent events, especially the role of the Administration in preparing a victory of the constitutionalists by its intervention and support of the Imbert junta.

You call our pamphlet, published by our Institute for International Labor Research, which I sent you, "an orthodox performance of the school of thought that asks, why let cynical and corrupt generals rule, when cynical and corrupt socialists are willing and able?" The point of the pamphlet was that the Bosch administration had been the alternative to cynical and corrupt rule by either group. Concerning the intervention, the pamphlet took the line very ably expounded by Senator Fulbright, after his committee had held hearings on the whole subject of the intervention. It was so far from orthodox on any side that it gave original and uncontradicted testimony about Imbert's connection with Communists.

In particular you charged that the CIA channelled a great deal of money to our educational work before Bosch's election and during his administration before he was overthrown by a military coup. The channel in question you say was the Kaplan Fund. I shall simply repeat what I have already said with much emphasis; namely, that, if any CIA money came through the Kaplan Fund to support our work, I and my colleagues were completely unaware of it. The Kaplan Fund itself never tried to dictate to us and during Juan Bosch's administration, we most emphatically did not dictate to him.

What we did through our very able and efficient secretary-treasurer, Sacha Volman, was to set up an educational agency of a comprehensive sort uniting various do-good organizations legally under the title of CIDES. The pamphlet describing the work has been widely circulated in Spanish. The Eng-

lish version has had some circulation here among experts and has won very high praise, among others from the Brookings Institute.

If the government supported this work through the CIA without our knowledge, the government did a good thing of a sort hardly to be expected in view of its general record. Certainly the military, including the CIA, on the ground in the Dominican Republic, showed no evidence in favor but very much the contrary.

You say Sacha Volman was the first person kicked out after the coup because of his Marxist ideas. Are you arguing that the CIA supported this wicked Marxist who was only discovered by the military oligarchs in the Dominican Republic? He was kicked out because he was opposed to the outrageous violation of democracy in the coup which deposed Bosch and we are proud of the fact. We are also rather proud of the fact that the de facto government after the coup asked us back but without the ability to give the guarantees which, of course, we demanded, after the way in which we had been attacked. Since the provisional government was set up, not only has Juan Bosch, whom I am proud to call my friend, wished our return, but also Joachim Balaguer has requested it. The so-called Social Christian Party has taken life action.

These are the facts and it takes an extraordinary imagination to make out that I or any of my colleagues are CIA agents. I only wish the CIA and all the rest of the government would follow the line for which I argued in the pamphlet which in effect was what Senator Fulbright was saying in his famous speech.

Finally, I hope you have called to the attention of your readers that while, as was to be expected, American intervention greatly increased the number and influence of Communists in the Dominican Republic, Juan Bosch and his PRD were strong enough to defeat the proposal of the Communist-led unions for a general strike which was to have been held on November 4.

NORMAN THOMAS

New York.